



HUD NEWS

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Shaun Donovan, Secretary
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HUD, FEMA TO PROVIDE UP TO SIX MONTHS OF TRANSITIONAL RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES AFFECTED BY HURRICANES KATRINA, RITA

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today the details of a new six-month transition rental assistance program for families currently enrolled in the *Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP-Katrina/Rita)*. HUD and FEMA will provide the additional assistance to families as needed until August 31 to give them more time to transition out of the DHAP program, either to self-sufficiency or other federal or state housing programs, including HUD's *Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)* program.

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan is also expanding outreach to all HCV income-eligible families to encourage transition to HCV assistance, another measure aimed at helping families transition from disaster assistance during difficult economic times.

"At the beginning of my tenure at HUD, I was dismayed to see that very little had been done in the previous administration to ensure that these families were transitioned out of the DHAP program in a way that did not leave them struggling during these difficult economic times," said Donovan. "This transition plan will give us more time to transition these families on to continued assistance or self-sufficiency. With a very short amount of time to reverse the course and implement this new transition program, we will work as hard as we can, along with our partners at FEMA and at the local level, to minimize any disruptions that may occur."

"We understand the importance of helping states smoothly transition families into a better long-term living environment," said Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. "This transition opportunity allows FEMA to continue to be responsive to states' needs by providing innovative, flexible and compassionate solutions to help disaster survivors get back on their feet. While we are proud of the tremendous progress we've made, we won't be satisfied until every disaster survivor has the opportunity to successfully navigate the road to recovery."

DHAP-Katrina/Rita is a temporary rental assistance program designed to help families displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Congress previously authorized \$85 million to transition all income-eligible families into the HCV assistance program; however, the previous administration only encouraged the most vulnerable families to participate: seniors, the disabled, or extremely low-income. Secretary Donovan, under Congress's original authority, is making those funds available to transition all HCV income-eligible families.

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DHAP-Katrina/Rita is scheduled to expire on February 28 for the approximately 31,400 families who are currently receiving assistance; however, all families currently receiving assistance are eligible for the new transition assistance program for up to six months. In addition, families should immediately contact their public housing authorities (PHAs) to determine eligibility for HCV assistance.

Details of the HUD/FEMA transition plan announced today include:

- The transition assistance plan will help families in two significant ways. First, consistent with congressional direction, HUD is now expanding HCV outreach from only senior, disabled and extremely low-income families, to now include all very low-income families that are eligible for assistance. Next, the transition assistance plan will allow HUD and its local public housing authority (PHA) partners additional time to move more eligible families to the Housing Choice Voucher program, which will ensure continued housing assistance, or on to self-sufficiency.
- The plan will begin on March 1 and will extend up to August 31. For the month of March, PHAs will receive funding from HUD to pay rent to landlords on behalf of families who received DHAP-Katrina/Rita assistance in February 2009. Beginning with the March payment and each month thereafter, families receiving assistance will be required to pay an additional \$100 toward the rent, in a step down manner, until they reach self-sufficiency or have transitioned onto continued assistance through the HCV program. Eligible Families are encouraged to transition to the HCV program immediately in order to avoid the step-down payments.
- Participating families and landlords will receive letters to explain the process and any action required on their part.
- Families who believe they may be eligible for Housing Choice Vouchers must immediately contact their local Public Housing Authority (PHA) to begin the application process.

For more information about the DHAP transition program, please visit [HUD's website](#) or contact your local PHA to assess eligibility.

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HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to sustaining homeownership; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development and enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.